# SEEING ISRAEL

## THROUGH GOD'S EYES

EBENEZER
OPERATION EXODUS

*A Christian organisation helping the Jewish people return to Israel*

One of the agonising frustrations for me as a pastor over the years has been the inability of the Church to get to grips with Israel. When fellow Christians don't have empathy or concern for Israel I take it personally—it hurts. I feel it. It is a dilemma I answer with prayer. A consistent prayer of mine for some time now has been:

'Thank you, Lord, for removing the cataracts of replacement theology from the eyes of the Church so that she can now see the full light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ – part of that glorious knowledge being to the Jew first! (Romans 1:16)

I like to keep my praying positive by declaring in it what I want to see happen, even though at present the reality may appear different. Circumstantial facts never change truth. But truth can change circumstantial facts. Jesus said to the Father, *'your word is truth'* (John 17: 17). The fact may be that a portion of the Church is blind concerning Israel but the truth is that God gives sight to the blind and He answers the prayers of the righteous.

The fact may be that people are telling us to shut up about Israel but the truth is that God has commanded us in Jeremiah 31:10, *"… proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'"* In this way the truth of God's Word triumphs over negative circumstantial facts.

In fulfilling her global mission, the Church will never be able to see with clarity what she needs to see until she is granted the grace to see through God's eyes. And although His vision is a panoramic view of an entire lost world for whom Christ died, yet foremost, at the very centre of this God-seeing eye, are the sheep of the House of Israel to whom Christ was sent first. The Jewish people are the apple of His eye! They are by no means the only concern before God; He cares for all people but the Jewish people have a prioritised place before Him.

## The people of Israel are at the centre of God's view of the world

Yes, God's vision for the world is broad and spans from horizon to horizon and to every nation, yet at the very centre of His panoramic view of the world you will find the people of Israel.

We read in the Scriptures: *'When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, He set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel … He shielded him and cared for him; He guarded him as the apple of His eye'* (Deuteronomy 32:8 & 10).

In Romans 1:16 the apostle Paul says: *'I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.'*

My point is: to see as God sees does not mean to see Israel only but it does mean to see with eyes that have Israel in her rightful place before Him. This is not an exclusive vision of Israel but a prioritised one. Whenever I pray now for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the world I first pray that it be poured out upon Israel. That's the prioritised vision.

Whenever we come to the distribution of mission funds in my own church we always settle our 'account' with Israel first (Romans 15:26-27).

Once the 'Israel' portion has been allotted then we talk about apportioning the rest. That is prioritised vision.

Such a vision may not necessarily demand greater quantity but it certainly demands priority. Making sure the baby is fed before the rest of the family is certainly not speaking of quantity but it does speak of priority.

Our church's mission is 'To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile' so priority for us also means the greater piece of the pie for the Israel-supporting ministries, especially Ebenezer.

Once you have Israel in the right place, seeing her in the very centre of God's vision, then the picture is no longer blurred but very clear. Your view is centred correctly.

Let us seek to see Israel through God's eyes.

**By Pastor Nigel Woodley,**
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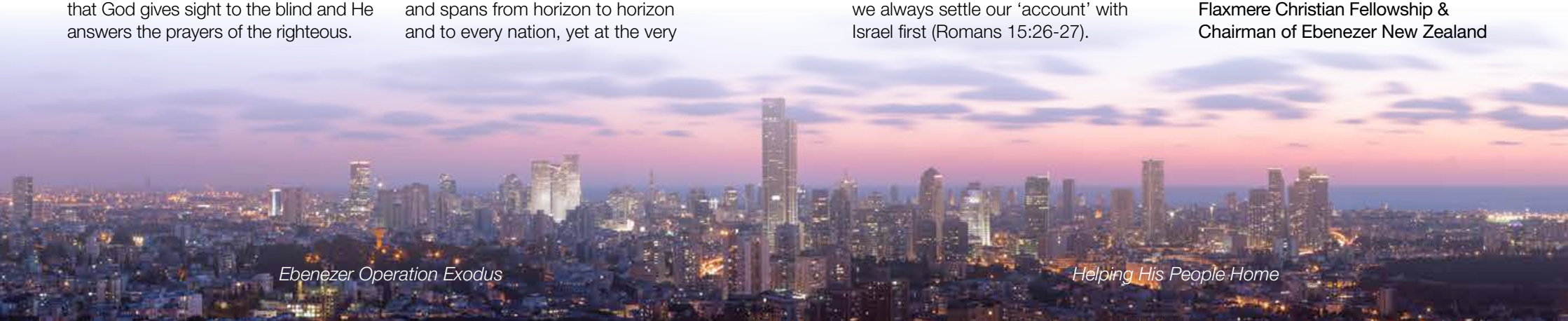

*Ebenezer Operation Exodus*

*Helping His People Home*

Our vision is to be servants and intercessors of the Lord, to help the Jewish people return to the land of Israel from all the nations and to proclaim God's Kingdom purposes for their return.

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